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FM AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4585
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS MAPUTO 001408

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STATE FOR AF/S - HTREGER
MCC FOR SGAULL
NSC FOR CCOURVILLE
PRETORIA FOR LEGATT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KCOR](#) [KCRM](#) [MZ](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#)

SUBJECT: MOZAMBIQUE: MURDER OF DIRECTOR OF MAPUTO CENTRAL PRISON

¶1. On October 21 the Director of Maputo Central Prison, Jorge Microsse, was fatally shot in the Pequenos Libombos area of Boane district, about 40 kilometers outside Maputo city. According to press reports, Microsse was approached in his car by four armed men at approximately 1730 hrs as he stopped to drop off two secondary school students he and his girlfriend had picked up hitchhiking. Microsse was killed instantly by a single shot to the chest; no one else was injured. The armed men escaped in Microsse's car, an older car unlikely to attract carjackers. All three witnesses were taken into police custody for questioning. The two students were subsequently released. As of October 27 the girlfriend remained in custody for additional questioning, with her identity not yet made public. It is unclear whether she has been identified as a suspect in the murder.

¶2. According to press reports, Microsse made many enemies in his short time as director of the Maputo Central Prison (he only took over as director at the start of this year). He was outspoken about the existence of "corrupt networks" operating within the prison and reportedly had received numerous death threats. Following a mass break-out in May, Microsse suspended a number of guards suspected of extorting money from prisoners in exchange for false release papers and/or looking the other way during prison escapes. On October 17 Microsse reportedly sent a letter to the National Directorate of Prisons claiming he was being harassed by a suspected armed robber, Bernardo Tivane, who was out of prison on bail. (Note: Microsse allegedly had held up Tivane's bail release. End note.) The Maputo Central Prison has been the scene of numerous high-profile breakouts over the past few years, including the 2001 and 2004 escapes by Anibal dos Santos Junior (Anibalzinho), the man charged with leading the group that murdered prominent investigative journalist Carlos Cardoso in November 2000.

¶3. Comment: Most observers have dismissed the notion that the attack was a crime of opportunity, believing instead that Microsse's murder was aimed at thwarting the Guebuza government's efforts to fight corruption and organized crime within the prison system.
La Lime